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## NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S ARTIFICIAL RESERVOIR.

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In a previous number of *HEBRAICA*<sup>1</sup> I called attention to an old structure, the tunnel of Negub, by means of a partial restoration of an inscription, which had been previously given up as hopelessly mutilated. This time I should like to call attention to a similar undertaking, one of which we now have many proofs. The first decipherer (Oppert) of the great Nebuchadnezzar inscription in the East India House, London, has already pointed out that one passage agrees exactly with a notice of Berossus. I R. 58, VIII. 52—IX. 1 we read :

i-na bi-i-ri-šu-nu bi-ti-iḫ a-gur-ri i-ib-ti-iḫ ma i-na ri-i-ši-šu ku-um-mu ra-ba-a a-na šu-ba-at šar-ru-ti-ia i-na ku-up-ri u a-gur-ri ša-ki-iš i-bu-uš ma it-ti iḫal abī u-rad-dī ma in arḫi ša-al-mu i-na ūmu šīmu i-ra-sa i-na i-ra-at ki-gal-lu u-ša-ar-ši-id ma ri-i-ši-ša u-za-aḫ-ḫi-ir ḫu-ur-sa-ni-iš i-na XV. ū-mu ši-bi-ir-ša u-ša-ak-li-il ma

In between (*i. e.*, the walls) I erected a mole of brick. On its top I built a large building for my royal residence and joined it to the palace of my father<sup>2</sup> In a lucky month, on an auspicious day, "I joined its breast to the breast of the nether world,"<sup>3</sup> and elevated its top like a mountain forest. In 15 days I finished its building.

The corresponding passage in Berossus (Abydenus ap. Eusebius Chron. ed. Schoene, p. 38) reads as follows : "When Nebuchadnezzar had received the royal power, he surrounded Babylon with a triple wall in 15 days. He drew off the Nahr-malka, an arm of the Euphrates. Above the city Sippara he built a reservoir, 40 parasangs in circumference, and 20 fathoms deep, and built gates which could be opened so as to irrigate the plain. It was called ὀχτρογνώμονας."

We pass over the rapidity with which the building is said to have been constructed. It is sufficient to call attention to the wonderful way in which the words of Nebuchadnezzar agree with those of Berossus.

The cuneiform inscriptions give us also information about the triple walls. The two principal walls, Imgur-Bil and Nimitti-Bil, are frequently mentioned ; and I myself have published a text in the *Ztschrft. f. d. Assyriologie*, I., p. 337, sqq. (cf. also *ibid.* II., p. 124, sqq.) relating to the building of the third outer wall. It has not been possible, up to the present time, to identify the works on the Nahr-

<sup>1</sup> October, 1887, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> I layed the foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Or i-kal-at (?) : to the (before mentioned) temples?

malka and the building of the reservoir. But it is evident that these works are likewise mentioned in the inscription of Nabopolassar published by me in the *Ztschrift. f. d. Assyriologie*, II., p. 69, sqq. In my notes to this inscription (*ibid.* p. 75) I have already made the conjecture that, by the *mí nuḥši niklûti* there mentioned, the reservoirs mentioned by Rassam, *Babylonian Cities*, Victoria Institute, p. 5,<sup>1</sup> London, are meant. This conjecture is verified by the passage in Berossus mentioned above. The works were used for collecting the water for the irrigation of the land, for which the Babylonian expression *mí nuḥši* "water of fruitfulness" very well fits. The fact that in one place the buildings are ascribed to Nabopolassar, in the other to his son Nebuchadnezzar presents no difficulties. Either a mistake has been made by one of the many editors of Berossus (Abydenus), or this work, like so many others, was begun by Nabopolassar, and only finished by his son. Whether we have, as I conjectured (*loc. cit.* p. 70) any information in this same inscription about buildings erected on the Nahr-Malka, and mentioned also by Berossus, cannot yet with certainty be decided. In both cases the expression is not quite clear.

As I think I can further the understanding of that inscription a little, I allow the passage I have mentioned to follow (Nabop. I. 4—II. 8).

14. nâru Purattu is-si-šu-ma	The Euphrates had left it (Sippara).
15. a-na ku-ud (?)—dul <sup>2</sup> bi-lu-ti-šu-nu	to... ..its greatness
16. mi-í i-ri-í-ku a-na <sup>3</sup> sa-a-bu	the waters had departed to (from?)..
II. 1. Na-bi-um-abil-u-šu-ur	Nabopolassar,
2. a-aš-ru ša-aḥ-ṭim	the humble, the submissive,
3. pa-li-iḥ ili ia-a-ti	worshiper of the gods
4. nâr Sippara	caused the canal of Sippara
5. lu-u-ša-aḥ-ra-am-ma	to be dug.
6. mi-í nu-uḥ-ši nik-lu-tim	An artificial reservoir
7. a-na Šamšu bíli-ia	for Šamaš my master,
8. lu-u-ki-in	I constructed.

It is worthy of note how exactly the name given to the reservoir, *mí nuḥši*, "waters of abundance, of fruitfulness," agrees with the statement made by Berossus-Abydenus that its purpose was "to irrigate the plain."

<sup>1</sup>"Remains of prodigious basins are seen, in which a surplus supply must have been kept for any emergency when the water in the Euphrates falls low."

<sup>2</sup>Not *ku*!

<sup>3</sup>cf. ZA. II. 145.